

Appl No. 09/787,409
Reply to Office Action of April 17, 2003.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 24-69 are presently active in this case. The present Amendment amends Claims 24-27, 29-32, 36, 40, 43-45; and adds Claims 47-69.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 40 and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 24, 34, 45-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirzel (U.S. Patent No. 5,007,442). Claims 24, 27-29 and 33-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by French Patent '805 (French Patent No. 2 769 805). Claims 24, 39 and 45-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Dumler (U.S. Patent No. 6,029,675). Claims 24-26, 28-29, 37 and 45-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Montgomery et al., in view of abstract of Japanese patent '033 (Japanese Patent No. 09-108033). Claims 40-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirzel.

Claims 30-32, 36, 38 and 43 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, Claims 30, 31, 36 and 43 are rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Claims 30-32, 36, 38, 43, 44 and 51 (new claim depending from Claim 30) are allowable.

In response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Claims 40 and 44 are amended to correct the noted informalities. In view of amended Claims 40 and 44, it

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is believed that all pending claims are definite and no further rejection on that basis is anticipated. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work with the Examiner to derive mutually acceptable language.

Claims 24-27, 29, 32, 36, and 45 are amended to corrected informalities noted upon Applicant's review. These formal changes do not introduce new matter.

In response to the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a), Claim 24 is amended to recite that, after assembling, the parts include a first part with teeth inclined in a first direction and a second part with teeth inclined in a second direction different from the first direction. This feature finds support in the disclosure as originally filed, for example, at page 7, lines 26-30. Accordingly, this change does not raise a question of new matter. The prior art does not teach or suggests this feature. Accordingly, Claims 24, 27-29, 33-35, 37-42, 45-46 are in condition for allowance.

Claim 25 is rewritten in independent form. Claim 25 recites at least two separate parts assembled by molding a thermoplastic material in a single piece and the two parts being joined together pivotably by a film hinge. The prior art does not teach or suggest this combination of features. Accordingly Claims 25-26 are in condition for allowance.

New Claims 47-50 and 52-54 depend from Claim 24, and are thus also believed to be allowable. These claims recite various features previously recited in the original claims so that they are not believed to raise a question of new matter. In particular, new Claims 48-50 recite features which were set forth in allowable Claim 30, so that these claims are believed to be allowable at least for the same reason Claim 30 was indicated as allowable.

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New Claims 55-69 recite features related to the coupling between the two parts. Specifically, Claims 55-57 and 66-68 recite features shown in Fig. 3; Claims 58-59 recite features shown in Fig. 5; and Claims 60-65 and 69 recite features shown in Figs. 6-9. Therefore, new Claims 55-65 are not believed to raise a question of new matter. The prior art does not teach or suggests the features of new independent Claims 55, 58, 60, and 66-69. Accordingly, Claims 55-69 are also in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 24-69 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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